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# FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

## Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, wishes to call to the attention of the Commission on Population and Development, as it prepares for its thirtieth session, the increasing numbers of older persons worldwide.

Since the topic for the Commission in this year, 1997, is "international migration, with special emphasis on the linkages between migration and development and on gender issues and the family", we ask for its support for and focus on not only the migrants, but more especially those who are left behind.

Nearly 1 billion people migrate within country borders each decade, increasing the vulnerability of those who remain behind, especially the older people and women. Family members left behind in places of origin are usually members of the older generations. Often they are left to mind the children of

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their children, with promises of support from children who migrate to the cities to seek employment. In many cases, they are left with only the promises and the children of their children to raise, for the support hasn't come because the promised land of the city didn't live up to its promise.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the inclusion of older people in local development planning, to ensure that they have equal access to credit and education and that they receive the technical assistance they need to foster investment in productive activities in their places of origin. Whether or not migration occurs, older persons must be equipped to take care of themselves and, very probably, also of the children of their children. We are calling for the social and economic integration of older persons worldwide so that they may live their lives in dignity and independence and fulfil the promises of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women.

In order to improve migration policy formulation, there needs to be the collection of new data, disaggregated by age and sex, and analysis of existing data on ageing-related issues, including housing, family structure and household composition. Without this, sound policies cannot be formulated.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development adopted at the Conference takes note of older people's increasing absolute numbers and their proportional increase relative to the working-age population in many countries.

The world is facing changing age structures in the future. The ageing of populations has significant implications for changing patterns of mortality and disease and for the quality of life for not only older generations, but all generations.

AARP requests the Commission on Population and Development, in its follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development, to consider this growing segment of the population, its needs, the role it plays in migration, and how the lives of older people, whether as refugees, migrants or those who stay behind, can be improved and their contributions to society enhanced.

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